Claims

1. An electronic file manipulation method used to manipulate an electronic file, said method comprising:

a packaging step of packaging a selected file and at least 5 one related file related to the file into a single file; and

an unpackaging step of unpackaging the package provided by packaging the files into the selected file and the related file.

10 2. An electronic file manipulation method used to manipulate an electronic file, said method comprising:

a packaging step of packaging a selected file and a file related to the file into a single file.

15 3. An electronic file manipulation method used to manipulate an electronic file, said method comprising:

a file analysis step of analyzing a package file into which a selected file and a file related to the file are packaged as a single file, as the selected file and the file related 20 to the file.

4. A layout edit apparatus for editing a layout of an image area for displaying an image, said apparatus comprising:

layout edit means for placing at least one image and at 25 least one merge image area into which an image can be merged

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and editing a layout; and

file manipulation means for manipulating a file using a method as claimed in claim 1, wherein

said file manipulation means is file manipulation means

5   for adopting an information file containing information concerning placement of the image and the image area in the layout created and information concerning an image file used with the layout as the selected file and at least one file used with the layout as the related file.

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5. A layout edit apparatus for editing a layout of an image area for displaying an image, said apparatus comprising:

layout edit means for placing at least one image and at least one merge image area into which an image can be merged

15   and editing a layout; and

file output means for outputting an information file containing information concerning placement of the image and the image area in the layout created and information concerning an image file used with the layout and at least one file used

20   with the layout as a single package file.

6. An image processing system comprising an image output apparatus for outputting a digital image file and a layout definition file for defining a layout to display a digital image

25   represented by the digital image file and an image display

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apparatus for displaying the digital image represented by the output digital image file based on the layout definition file, characterized in that:

said image output apparatus has packaging means for 5 packaging the digital image file and the layout definition file into a single package file and output means for outputting the single package file, thereby outputting the digital image file and the layout definition file, and that

said image display apparatus has input means for 10 inputting the output package file and unpackaging means for acquiring the digital image file and the layout definition file from the input package file.

7. An image processing method for transferring a digital image 15 file and a layout definition file between an image output apparatus for outputting a digital image file and a layout definition file for defining a layout to display a digital image represented by the digital image file and an image display apparatus for displaying the digital image represented by the 20 output digital image file based on the layout definition file, characterized by:

a packaging step of packaging the digital image file and the layout definition file into a single package file and an output step of outputting the single package file, thereby 25 outputting the digital image file and the layout definition

file in said image output apparatus; and

    an input step of inputting the output package file and
an unpackaging step of acquiring the digital image file and
the layout definition file from the input package file as
5   unpackaging in said image display apparatus.

8. A layout edit method, characterized by:

    a user interface step of accepting a command to edit a
layout of an image element in a predetermined area on a screen;
10   a layout edit step of editing a layout control file for
controlling the layout of the image element based on the command
accepted in said user interface step; and

    an output step of converting a content file representing
all image elements laid out in the predetermined area and a
15 layout control file for controlling the layout of all image
elements laid out in the predetermined area into a single
package file and outputting the package file.

9. A layout edit apparatus characterized by:

20   user interface means for accepting a command to edit a
layout of an image element in a predetermined area on a screen;

    layout edit means for editing a layout control file for
controlling the layout of the image element based on the command
accepted by said user interface means; and

25   output means for converting a content file representing

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all image elements laid out in the predetermined area and a layout control file for controlling the layout of all image elements laid out in the predetermined area into a single package file and outputting the package file.

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10. A display data processing method characterized by:

a storage step of storing files making up a template;

a selection step of selecting an image element to be merged into the template; and

10   an output step of converting the files making up the template and a user file representing the image element selected in said selection step into a single file and outputting the file.

15   11. A display data processing apparatus characterized by:

storage means for storing files making up a template;

selection means for selecting an image element to be merged into the template; and

output means for converting the files making up the

20   template and a user file representing the image element selected by said selection means into a single file and outputting the file.

12. A display data processing method characterized by:

25   a conversion step of converting a content file

representing an image element and a layout control file for controlling a layout of the image element into a single package file; and

a use limitation step of storing use limitation data to
5   permit or inhibit individual use of content data contained in the package file representing the image element or layout control data contained in the package file for controlling the layout of the image element in the package file.

10   13. A display data processing apparatus characterized by:
conversion means for converting a content file representing an image element and a layout control file for controlling a layout of the image element into a single package file; and

15   use limitation means for storing use limitation data to permit or inhibit individual use of data contained in the package file representing the image element or data contained in the package file for controlling the layout of the image element in the package file.

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14. A display data processing method characterized by:
a display step of reading a package file storing content data representing an image element, layout control data for controlling a layout of the image element, and use limitation
25   data and displaying the content data under the control of the

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layout control data;

an individual use step of reading the package file and using the content data or the layout control data individually; and

5   a management step of managing access to the package file and permitting or inhibiting the use in response to the use descriptions and the use limitation data.

15. A display data processing apparatus characterized by:

10   display means for reading a package file storing content data representing an image element, layout control data for controlling a layout of the image element, and use limitation data and displaying the content data under the control of the layout control data;

15   individual use means for reading the package file and using the content data or the layout control data individually; and

management means for managing access to the package file and permitting or inhibiting the use in response to the use

20   descriptions and the use limitation data.

16. A file data structure characterized by:

a first area in which content data representing an image element is recorded;

25   a second area in which layout control data for

controlling a layout of the image element is recorded; and

a third area in which use limitation data to limit use of the content data or the layout control data is recorded.

5   17. A display data management method characterized by the steps of:

distributing a package file recording content data representing an image element, layout control data for controlling a layout of the image element, and use limitation

10   data to a reception terminal through a network;

storing identification information proper to the reception terminal in the package file in response to distribution of the package file; and

making a comparison between information proper to a use

15   terminal and the identification information stored in the package file and permitting or inhibiting use of the content data or the layout control data contained in the package file by the use terminal in response to the comparison result.